

Section Nine

Doing, Learning, Growing, Perspective

- 337. Ancora Imparo
- 338. Expect Nothing, Give Thanks for Everything
- 339. The Solar Eclipse
- 340. Do All the Good You Can
- 341. Sunrise, Sunset
- 342. See What You Do Have
- 343. Vista Points
- 344. Becoming
- 345. Selfish or Selfless
- 346. Uncharted Waters
- 347. Hinge Points
- 348. Proper Perspective
- 349. What Is Our Work?
- 350. Finish the Work We Are In
- 351. Lose Yourself to Find Yourself
- 352. Maybe So, Maybe Not
- 353. A Time to Look Inward and Outward
- 354. These Things Are Important
- 355. Receive, Complete, Report
- 356. The Mortal or the Eternal Perspective
- 357. Line Upon Line
- 358. Choosing Between Good, Better, or Best
- 359. Never Measure Life By Your Possessions
- 360. Your Happiness
- 361. Find What You Look For
- 362. Time
- 363. Layers of Learning
- 364. The Power of Words
- 365. The Next Step
- 366. The Most Important Commandment
- 367. Two Educations
- 368. Make Every Decision in the Light of All Eternity
- 369. Successful People
- 370. Fill Your Bucket List with Goodness
- 371. Plant Then Harvest
- 372. I Have a Work for Thee
- 373. The Essence of Life
- 374. Greatness
- 375. Every Day Is a Great Day.

337. Ancora Imparo

"Ancora Imparo- I am still learning," is a quotation by the incomparable Michelangelo. He was an Italian sculptor, painter, architect and poet; the painter of the Sistine chapel and many other works. **Just as he was still learning and growing at the age of eighty eight years old, so we should continue to learn and grow throughout our lives.** As people grow older to maintain effective brain function they need to be involved in learning and study or the brain will begin to atrophy. We need to expand hobbies, study, mental exertion and physical effort in order to continue to learn and grow. Even if we have studied the Book of Mormon fifty or one hundred times we can still gain some new insights each time that we open its pages. Even if we have been to the temple hundreds of times we can still learn and grasp new insights through the process of personal revelation. In D&C 50:24 we are taught: "That which is of God is light, and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day." May we learn and grow continually, as we progress toward that perfect day.

338. **Expect Nothing, Give Thanks for Everything**

Of course we all have things we long and hope for, and we have been counseled to do so. In another sense we have no entitlements to a life of ease and comfort. Think of the baby born deaf, blind and dumb. Naked we came into this world and we are dependent on God for all that we have, even the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the care and nurture we receive from others in our infancy and formative years. It is truly humbling to think how dependent we are in so many ways. In one sense man is nothing, but when one examines the potential we have it is astounding what we can achieve. When we consider all that our Father in Heaven has given us, truly we should express constant gratitude and thanks for all that we have. We should give thanks for the bodies we enjoy, for the food we eat and the shelter that is around us, and all of the wonderful relationships and opportunities that we experience. When we develop that attitude of gratitude for all that we have, our lives become fuller and with greater depth and meaning. **May we learn to never take things for granted, and to always express thanks for all that we have each and every day of our lives.**

339. The Solar Eclipse

On August 21, 2017 a total solar eclipse passed over much of the United States. It truly was an event to behold! **Amazingly as the time arrived, the moon, which is four hundred times smaller than the sun, was able to blot out the light from the sun except for a spectacular ring which surrounded the moon.** The temperature also dropped about twenty degrees and there was a sunset appearance of panoramic proportions. Was it a coincidence? No, one was able to see the handiwork of God, who has also been described as "The Great Mathematician." As the prophet Jacob declared: "if there be no God we are not, for there could have been no creation," (2nd Nephi 11:7). Alma also taught: "All things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth, all things that are upon the face of it, yea and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form do witness that there is a Supreme Creator." (Alma 30:44) Have you considered that if we were closer to the sun we would burn or if we were further away we would freeze? Have you considered the way in which the earth rotates on its axis creating the cycles of day and night? We are finite in our minds and cannot comprehend even a millionth part of God's creations, but we can express gratitude for His tender mercies in creating this wonderful earth for us, His children, to dwell on and enjoy. Our Savior, Jesus Christ is: "the light of the sun, and the power thereof by which it was made," (D&C 88:7). May we open our eyes to see the handiwork of God and come to appreciate the true miracles of the earth upon which we dwell, the solar system that has been created for us, and the marvelous plan of salvation that allows us to someday return to their presence.

340. Do All The Good You Can

There is a wonderful thought expressed by John Wesley that goes as follows:

Do all the good you can.

By all the means you can.

In all the ways you can.

In all the places you can.

At all the times you can.

To all the people you can.

As long as you ever can. (John Wesley)

There are many opportunities to lift and serve each and every day of our lives. May we take advantage of those opportunities to do good to all, throughout our lives here upon the earth.

341. Sunrise, Sunset

In the Classic production of Fiddler on the Roof, Tevye and his wife sing of the passing of years and experiences which are unfolding powerfully before them. They share the following lines: **“Sunrise, sunset, sunrise, sunset, swiftly fly the years, one season following another, laden with happiness and tears.”** Each life has it's sunrise at birth and it's sunset at death. Most of us will see many sunrises and sunsets, what a beautiful sight indeed! They remind us of the beauty of this marvelous earth that we live on and all that a loving Heavenly Father has created for our comfort, joy, happiness and growth. It is difficult to see the sunset in life of those who we love as they slip gradually away to the next life. It would be easier if we could only see the sunrise that awaits them as they pass joyfully to the other side, into the waiting arms of loved ones who have gone on before. **Each sunrise reminds us that TODAY is the day we have to work with.** Yesterday has passed from our view and in a sense tomorrow never comes, for we live in the present. Each day well lived brings the feeling of a peaceful sunset to the events of the day and prepares us to enjoy the beauty and excitement of the day that will burst upon us with the sunrise of tomorrow. May we never be too busy to enjoy the beauty and the majesty of each sunrise and sunset in our lives as we walk along the beautiful journey of life.

342. See What You Do Have

It is easy for some people to see everything they don't have and not recognize what they do have. If you think about it, we have more today than nearly everyone in the history of the world before us. Most of us have access to three meals a day and a roof over our heads. Most of us have access to a car or other transportation. Many of us even have cell phones and computers. Most of us have a friend or friends and a reasonable state of good health. The freedom that we enjoy is only dreamed of by many who live and have lived upon the earth. Sometimes it always appears that the grass is greener on the other side of the hill but in reality usually it is not. In addition to the material things we enjoy we understand who we are and our place in the universe. We have minds to study and learn and we have the wonderful beauties of nature created for our enjoyment. Instead of focusing on what you don't have, focus on what you do have. The apostle Paul taught the Philippians: **"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and suffer need."** (Philippians 4:11-12). Let us learn from the apostle Paul to be content in whatever circumstance we find ourselves in and recognize and give thanks for the wonderful blessings that our Heavenly Father bestows upon us from day to day, hour to hour, at all times and in all places that we may be in.

343. Vista Points

Have you ever experienced the exhilaration of climbing a mountain peak to arrive at the summit and witness a breathtaking panoramic view before you? On rare occasions you may see mountain ranges that extend to several layers of mountains sprinkled with many colors of gold, green, yellow and the wildflowers that lie beneath your feet. **You may feel the power of the oceans and the majestic towering beauty of the Redwoods. Those vistas truly witness to us the majesty of God and the infinite beauties of this wonderful world we live in.** Just as there are physical vista points there are also spiritual vista points: those "aha" moments when we discover truths that will change the direction of our lives forever. Some of the moments are the birth of one's testimony, and to experience the great cleansing and enabling power of the atonement; to experience the sacred moment of a new birth, or the confirmation at the death of a loved one that the Lord has called another valiant child home. May we ponder on the wonder of Heavenly Father's plan for us and His tender mercies along the way. May we recognize His hand in our lives, guiding us, protecting us, nurturing us and providing for our every need. Know that He does all for our best good, and the wonderful world we live in is a great place to begin to understand His majesty and power blessing our lives day by day.

344. Becoming

Becoming

Becoming, becoming, becoming what you say?
Becoming all that I can be in each and every way.
I'll learn each day from days gone by,
And not those same mistakes let slide.
To grow in every test I meet that I, my foe might beat.
My foe you say and who be he? He be many, yes, many.
Yes, all those things that limit me and betray, (betray me).
All those things within and out I've not yet overcome.
All those things, which if left be, would surely defeat me.
Just look inside what do you see that isn't fitting, (not fitting)?
All those habits, thoughts and deeds that leave you hurting, (yes, hurting).
All those things that you should do that somehow don't get done.
All those things you've tried before, but not yet overcome.

Becoming, becoming, becoming who you'd be.
By weeding out those little faults and things that pull you down.
Buy changing habits one by one and doing deeds that should be done.
Oh yes, we all have room to grow, so start and don't be slow!
Just look outside at forces there that will try men, (will try men).
It may be friends or worldly cares that entice them, (entice them).
Just be sure to hold the good and toss out all the bad.
Then you know you will be glad and not the one who's sad.
Then start today within yourself to become better, (yes, better).
Don't delay your sights to raise and to shoot higher, (yes, higher).
Make every day in every way better than before.
Go ahead and try it now, you may find that you like it!

Conclusion:

Becoming, becoming, becoming is your life.
A project huge to mold your life
Into the one you'd be someday.
That's why you're here on this great sphere
Se BECOME WHAT YOU MAY! RTS

Our life is a process of becoming: of becoming more like our Savior, becoming of greater service and fulfilling our mission here upon the earth. You only have one life to live so make it a great one!

345. Selfish or Selfless

One example of being selfish was in the Grand Council in Heaven. Lucifer wanted to have all the glory for himself. He wanted to ascend to the great throne of God. The Savior, on the other hand, was selfless. He said, "Father thy will be done and the glory be thine forever." (Moses 4:1-2). **We live in a world of selfishness. Most people want to know what's in it for them. They want to obtain more than their neighbor and think of ways in which they can get ahead. The Savior, on the other hand, showed us a higher law.** To the rich young ruler He taught that he should go and sell that which he had and give to the poor and he would have treasures in heaven. At some point in our lives we probably find ourselves on both sides of the scale. At some point in time we have probably been selfish, but on other occasions we have given of ourselves through service and become more selfless. The pride cycle of the Nephites is a great example of the evils of selfishness, a twin sister of pride. When they became prideful they fell into sin and eventually bondage. As they repented and became humble they became selfless and more prosperous. We face many choices in our lives; whether we will be selfish or selfless is one of those recurrent choices that will shape our eternal destiny.

346. Uncharted Waters

Centuries ago, when people thought the world was flat, mariners truly were going into uncharted waters when they attempted to sail the oceans. If you have ever been out on the ocean in a small boat and the swells rise high above you so you can see nothing else, you feel small, helpless and at the mercy of the great ocean before you. Imagine being in that situation day after day and not even knowing where you are! **There are times for each of us when we venture into new circumstances and situations that for us are also uncharted waters:** The first day at school or a new job; the first day of marriage or being on a new team; facing a life threatening illness and so many other situations. How can we approach these circumstances with confidence to move forward? **There are four simple suggestions to help each of us as we open new doors in the pathway of life. First, prayer.** Know that our Heavenly Father is mindful of you and He knows the path that lies before you. **Second, follow the spirit.** We may be like Nephi, being led by the spirit but not knowing beforehand what he should do. **Third, talk to others who have faced the circumstance you will be entering** or observe the actions of those who are passing through the door that you will soon enter. **Fourth, step forward in faith.** God sent us here not to fail but eventually to succeed. Of course, there will be failures along the way but we can make them stepping stones as we learn from each circumstance in life to become stronger, and to complete our mission here upon the earth.

347. Hinge Points

There have been many hinge points in history that have greatly affected mankind. Gutenberg brought a great wealth of knowledge to the world through the creation of the printing press. Columbus through the Spirit of the Lord was guided to discover the Americas. Henry Ford started mass production of the automobile, and Thomas Edison harnessed the power of electricity to produce a great source of power throughout the world. George Washington and the founding fathers created a government of the people, by the people, and for the people that has withstood the test of time as a great democracy. Abraham Lincoln forged onward in perilous times to protect that democracy and to preserve the union we enjoy today. Spiritual hinge points have also been noted such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joseph Smith, and the great hinge point of all through our Savior, Jesus Christ. There are also hinge points in our lives: choosing who and where to marry, choosing whether or not to pursue education, and whether or not we will be active in the gospel. These hinge points may affect your life for good or evil, for joy or misery. **May we always choose hinge points in our lives that will open to us the doors of happiness, service, fulfillment and productivity that will establish a righteous pattern to follow for all those who follow in our footsteps.**

348. Proper Perspective

Spencer W. Kimball was a man who suffered from many illnesses and infirmities, but he achieved a remarkable perspective regarding our sorrows, sicknesses and death. He taught: "If we looked at mortality as the whole of existence, then pain, sorrow, failure, and short life would be a calamity. But if we look upon life as an eternal thing stretching far into the premortal past and on into the eternal post-death future then all happenings may be put into proper perspective," ...He continued, "If we say that early death is a calamity, disaster, or tragedy, would it not be saying that mortality is preferable to an earlier entrance into the spirit world and to eventual salvation and exaltation? If mortality be the perfect state, then death would be a frustration, but the gospel teaches us there is no tragedy in death, but only in sin." In the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord declared: "And it shall come to pass that those who die in me shall not taste of death, for it shall be sweet unto them." (D&C 42:46). **Let us not fear death nor pain, but rather let us trust in the Lord and His timetable through all the experiences of life, including death.**

349. What Is Our Work?

We are all familiar with God's work and glory, which is to "Bring to pass the immortality and Eternal Life of man." (Moses 1:39). But do we know what our work is? In section 11 of the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord declared the following to Hyrum Smith, and likewise to each of us. D&C 11: 20, **"Behold, this is your work, to keep my commandments, yea, with all your heart might, mind and strength."** As the Jaredites were preparing to cross the great waters the Lord told the brother of Jared, **"Go to work and build, after the manner of barges which ye have hitherto built."** And... **the brother of Jared did GO TO WORK, and also his brethren.** (Ether 2:16). It is our work to do what the Lord asks of us and to do it with all of our hearts. It is a blessing in life to be able to learn to work hard, to stick to our task until it sticks to us. Mission presidents love young men who have learned how to work hard. We live in a life that by many counts is a life of luxury and ease, but it still requires effort and work to achieve worthwhile goals. **Work and self-discipline are two characteristics of successful individuals in any walk of life.**

350. Finish the Work We Are In

Abraham Lincoln stands as a great example of overcoming adversity and continuing to persevere in the face of multiple setbacks. Lincoln lost eight elections before ascending to the presidency. He went bankrupt and spent seventeen years paying off his debts. He suffered a nervous breakdown and spent six months in bed. Yet, his resolve never wavered and he became one of the greatest presidents and Americans of all time. He offered some simple, but very important counsel to guide us in our hours of difficulty. He said: **“Let us strive to finish the work we are in.”** This message is further amplified in his concluding portion of the Gettysburg Address: “It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion--that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain--that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom-and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.” (Abraham Lincoln Nov. 19, 1863). Can you feel the strength of resolve that Lincoln had? As we find ourselves in the midst of challenging days that test our souls, let us resolve to be dedicated to continue faithful regardless of the foe that lies before us. “Let us strive to finish the work we are in.”

351. Lose Yourself to Find Yourself

The Savior, instructing His disciples gave them this counsel: “He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.” (Matt. 10:39). When it comes down to it the choice becomes: Do I want to do what I want to do or do I want to do what the Savior would have me do? When we seek to do our own will, at the conclusion of our lives our fruit becomes as the chaff of the wind, to blow away into oblivion. If, on the other hand, we have chosen to do the Savior’s will we become in a sense as president Spencer W. Kimball said: “My life is like a pair of old shoes, to be worn out in the service of the Master.” Service, love, charity, and placing the needs of others before the needs of ourselves becomes the recipe to find ourselves. My mother gave some wonderful counsel: **“The only things we ever keep are what we give away. The more we share, the more we have.” (Gwen Sutton)**. It has been repeatedly stated that the Lord can make far more out of us than we can make of ourselves. Let us say, as did the Savior in Gethsemane: “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine be done.” (Luke 22:42).

352. Maybe So, Maybe Not

There is an old Chinese parable that goes something like this:

A farmer and his son had a beloved stallion who helped the family earn a living. One day, the horse ran away and their neighbors exclaimed, "Your horse ran away, what terrible luck!" The farmer replied, "Maybe so, maybe not. We'll see."

A few days later, the horse returned home, leading a few wild mares back to the farm as well. The neighbors shouted out, "Your horse has returned, and brought several horses home with him. What great luck!" The farmer replied, "Maybe so, maybe not. We'll see."

Later that week, the farmer's son was trying to break one of the mares and she threw him to the ground, breaking his leg. The villagers cried, "Your son broke his leg, what terrible luck!" The farmer replied, "Maybe so, maybe not. We'll see."

A few weeks later, soldiers from the national army marched through town, recruiting all the able-bodied boys for the army. They did not take the farmer's son, still recovering from his injury. Friends shouted, "Your boy is spared, what tremendous luck!" To which the farmer replied, "Maybe so, maybe not. We'll see."

We can see the present and the past, but not the future. God sees and understands the whole picture, including the future. As we pass through both the trials and the joys of life, may we learn to understand that all things will be for our experience and for our good, as we are faithful. Through the prophet Joseph Smith the Lord said: "Search diligently, pray always, and be believing, and all things shall work together for your good, if ye walk uprightly and remember the covenant wherewith ye have covenanted with one another." (D&C 90:24). May we always remember and keep our covenants and our covenants will keep us safe.

353. A Time to Look Inward and Outward

That which we do for ourselves dies with us when we're gone.

That which we do for others lives forever, on and on. RTS

There are many choices in life, whether to focus on self-gratification or whether to give our lives in the service of others. At the entrance to the Brigham Young University campus there is a simple message that states: "Enter to learn, Go Forth to Serve." There is an important part of life when introspection helps us identify how we can do better, how we can find greater fulfillment and joy and happiness. There is a time for recreation, sports and entertainment, particularly when we do those things with those we love and hold dear, but if that becomes the end focus of our lives, our lives remain shallow and with less than total fulfillment. We salute those philanthropists who have gained more than they can utilize in a lifetime, who share their wealth and resources to bless the lives of those around them.

As we look inward, particularly meditating on our role and place in life, we can receive inspiration and revelation to help us to bless and lift the lives of those around us. As the Lord declared in Luke 9:24: "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall find it." Let us not focus only inward to satisfy our worldly desires, for then we may lose our inheritance of eternal life. **Let us look outward and lose our lives in the service of others and build God's kingdom here on the earth, then we truly shall find the great gift of eternal life.**

354. These Things are Important

President Monson related the story of Jay Hess, an airman shot down over Hanoi who was a prisoner of war for more than two years. After two years of confinement his captors let him write a message to his family on the condition that it would be twenty five words or less. What do you write in twenty five words? After contemplation these are the words he shared with his family: **“These things are important: temple marriage, mission, college, press on, set goals, write history, take pictures twice a year.”** Have you thought of what you would write? Jay Hess touched on some very important topics, family, eternal covenants, histories, goals, remaining faithful. We are so grateful for the many things that we have been able to do as a family and to have a yearly photo album has been incredible to reflect back on those wonderful memories. It was not always easy to take pictures like we do today. As I have thought of what I would share in 25 words or less I have selected these words to share: **Important Things: Atonement, Love, Temple Marriage, Family, Saving Ordinances, Obedience, Service, Joy, Conversion, Know God and Christ, Revelation, Scriptures, Faith, Hope, Charity, Testimony, Revelation, Faithful.** I would invite you to reflect on those things of importance and significance in your life. It is interesting that when important things are considered material things fade away.

355. Receive, Complete, Report

One great principle of progress is taking time to follow up on assignments given. President Monson has taught that when progress is measured progress improves, and when progress is measured and reported progress accelerates. Too often assignments are given but follow up is never provided. Reporting following the completion of an assignment is a great principle of stewardship to help us truly understand the charge given and our responsibilities within that assignment. To help start that process of returning and reporting we can through prayer report to our Father in Heaven how we have done during the day. We can reflect upon the day and resolve to repent of anything amiss during the course of the day. “Father, I’m sorry that I had that moment of anger, and about the thing I said about a person that was unkind. I’m thankful for the help that I received in that assignment. I felt Thy inspiration during the test that I took.” Learning the process of: **receive, complete, and report** will help move your life forward faster than you have ever done before.

356. The Mortal or Eternal Perspective?

In our lives we often want to make things as easy as possible; no challenges, with good weather and smooth sailing. We don’t like illnesses, death, loss of job or anything that would cause us distress or sorrow. If we look at the eternal perspective, we were sent here to the earth to learn and grow through our trials and experiences. As we see others pass through the veil of death it can be hard and appear to be a tragedy, but when we put on our spiritual glasses, so to speak, we can see that death is a vital step for us to pass on to the great goals of immortality and eternal life. We could never achieve eternal life if we remain here in mortality. Those very things that we may dread, illness, accidents, loss of associations, financial setbacks or other challenges, may be the very things that we need to refine our characters, increase our faith and help us recognize our dependence on the Lord and lead to true discipleship. **Circumstances in life become roadblocks or stepping stones. May we let each circumstance in life lead us closer to the Savior and may we remain faithful in all things, whatever challenge or trial befalls us.** That will help us to see the eternal perspective: that of a loving Father in Heaven who designed earth life for us to become complete and worthy to someday return to His presence.

357. Line Upon Line

"I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; and blessed are those who hearken to my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; for unto him that receiveth I will give more; and them that say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have." (2nd Nephi 28:30) In the D&C 93:13, 19-20 we learn that the Savior Himself grew from grace to grace, and also of our potential. "And he received not of the fulness at first, but continued from grace to grace until he received a fullness;.. I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time, receive of his fulness. For if you keep my commandments you shall receive of his fulness, and be glorified in me as I am in the Father; therefore, I say unto you, you shall receive grace for grace." **In our lives we improve and grow one line at a time as we grow in the gospel. It will become a pattern that the more we know, the more that we know that we don't know all things. It is like a man or woman climbing a mountain. The higher up the mountain you climb the clearer your vision and perspective become, but then you see the greater expanse yet to explore.** May we be ever learning and at the same time come to a greater knowledge of the truth.

358. Choosing Between Good, Better, and Best

In life we face many choices and the choices are oftentimes between good things. President Dallin H. Oaks gave some wonderful counsel in this regard; He said: **"Sometimes we have to forgo things that are good to do something better."** He said the best thing is to make a difference for good in what we do. The Lord reminded Martha that "One thing is needful and Mary hath chosen that better part which shall not be taken from her." Something we need to consider is not only the cost but even more important the value of our time and resources. President Gordon B. Hinckley has pleaded that we "work at our responsibility as parents as if everything in life counted on it, because in fact everything in life does count on it." Elder **Richard G. Scott** taught, **"Don't magnify the work to be done- simplify it."** **Thoreau taught, simplify-simplify-simplify!** Elder Oaks taught that family members need to vigorously act on increasing family togetherness and one-on-one time. It is a good thing when we can choose between good and bad and choose the good but it is a better thing to have three good choices and choose the very best of those options. We live in a world of many voices; listen to that spirit that leadeth to do good, and become the best that we can be one day at a time.

359. Never Measure Life By Your Possessions.

In the Sermon on the Mount the Savior taught: **"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."** (Matt 6:21). A simple question is: "What do we treasure most?" There is an interesting quotation by an unknown author which states: **"Never measure life by your possessions, measure it by the hearts you touched, the smiles you created, and the love you shared."** When asked how we measure our lives, do we think of our possessions or do we think of our relationships? **Do we want to give or do we want to take? If we think of love, love must be given, it cannot be bought with possessions.** The Savior taught that the desires of our heart determine what treasure we will seek for. The thought speaks of touching hearts, creating smiles and sharing love. That is a perfect formula for creating joyful and fulfilling relationships and peace in a troubled world. May our treasures be found in showing love, bringing a ray of sunshine to others, and lifting others through service without the hope of financial reward.

360. Your Happiness

“Your happiness will be in proportion to your charity and to your kindness and to your love of those with whom you associate here on earth.” (George Albert Smith). George Albert Smith was known for his tender kindness and love that he showed to all around him. Charity, kindness and love, three wonderful qualities which are intertwined in a perfect pattern. Think about it; as we grow in charity, kindness and love we grow in happiness, regardless of the circumstances we feel around us. Love drives out fear and brings peace. Kindness brings patience and acceptance along with the acceptance of responsibility to help another who stands in need. We are to pray for charity, for without it we are nothing. Charity is shown by our actions of love and concern for those around us and does not think of oneself first. Kindness and gentleness go hand in hand. These qualities when woven together bring power in our lives to overcome obstacles, to persevere in times of difficulty, and help us to understand the character of God by becoming more like Him.

361. Find What You Look For

There is much of good and much of evil in the world we live in today. Just as Nephi chose to focus on the good and the bounties and blessings of life, his brothers chose to focus on the negative and the challenges they faced. Many people see only the negative as they look through their own lens in life. In the Epistle of Titus he declared: “Unto the pure all things are pure.” (Titus 1:15). We each have a paradigm or a perspective through which we interpret all of the events that pass before us in life. Satan would have us see, accept and behave in all ways that are impure as Titus continued: “But unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.” (Titus 1:15) Just as Laman and Lemuel became past feeling because they did not recognize or follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost, so our mission in life should be to search for all that is pure and all that edifies and uplifts, making us worthy to have the companionship of the Holy Ghost always in our lives and to follow the path of true joy and happiness. **May we always look for those things that will put upon us the “Mind of Christ,” that we may strive to be more like Him each and every day of our lives.**

362. Time

What a paradox time can be! **On one hand directions in life can change in a few minutes or seconds, but on the other hand many things are measured only in a lifetime of experience.** From the mortal perspective time is measured so closely, but from an eternal perspective it is measured more as a state of being. Alma taught that: "All is as one day with God, and time only is measured unto men." (Alma 40:8). The Lord declared through the prophet Joseph Smith that: "All things are present before mine eyes." (D&C 38:2). Ordinances and Covenants made in the temple take only a few moments, or an hour or two to perform, but it takes a lifetime, even an eternity, to achieve our ultimate destiny. We should not idle away our time, but rather should be anxiously engaged in good causes and bring to pass much good. The Lord appoints to each of us our bounds and habitations to allow us to become who we will become. **It has been said that life should not be measured by the breaths you take but by the moments that take your breath away.** Our invitation is to live life to the fullest, to enjoy all that God has provided for us to enjoy, and then to proceed from time to eternity as we have become what He would have us to be.

363. Layers of Learning

In our lives we should be ever learning and growing, for that is the pattern of life. There are many layers of learning, but there are at least four steps that make our learning permanent and applicable. **The first step is to learn something for ourselves; to study and understand the lesson at hand and gain knowledge for ourselves. The second step is to be able to teach it to others. It has been said that he who teaches something learns twice. The third step is to apply the knowledge gained, for that is when knowledge becomes truly useful. The fourth step of learning is when the spark of knowledge becomes a flame that passes from one individual to another.** When we no longer have to push the engine so to speak, others will have learned the same lesson and will in turn pass that knowledge on to those who follow. Learning passed on from generation to generation in families is the greatest pattern of learning that we can achieve. Start today to learn and grow and find the way to perpetuate those lessons learned with those you love from now to eternity.

364. The Power of Words

There is a great power in the written and spoken word. In John chapter one the Savior is described as The Word. John states that "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." (John 1:3). By power of the word the brother of Jared was able to move a mountain. Words can be powerful either for good or for evil. **With words of encouragement lives can be uplifted and find new meaning and purpose to go on in difficult times.** Winston Churchill inspired a country to fight on against nearly insurmountable odds to maintain the cause of freedom across Europe and the world. He declared: "What is our aim? I can answer in one word; it is victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory no matter how hard or long the road may be; for without victory there is no survival." **Mother Teresa and Gandhi used the spoken word to influence untold individuals for good.** Words can also be used to destroy confidence and feelings of self-worth. Satan uses words to deceive and to tempt us in our journey through life. If God spoke and the world was, should we not hearken to His voice, and speak His words in love, encouragement and inspiration to bless the lives of those around us. **Choose your words carefully for in them you will find a life of fulfillment and joy or a life that becomes as chaff in the wind if you squander away the precious moments of life.**

365. The Next Step

“Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow.” In the Doctrine and Covenants section 93 we are invited to grow from “grace to grace” just as the Savior did. According to the plan of salvation we are to learn, “line upon line and precept upon precept.” We develop patience by experiencing challenges which require patience. So is the pattern of our lives. In sports we learn one segment of a skill or play and then add other components until the entire skill is developed. Once we have mastered one skill we must extend beyond that comfort zone into further reaches of growth and experience. Usually as we proceed to the next step it is not without growing pains, learning how to fall down and then get up again and do a little better. A person who has never failed at anything probably hasn’t tried too many things. We can develop a pattern of growth by asking ourselves, what is the next step? That will open the door to new growth and discovery as we walk along the pathway of life.

366. The Most Important Commandment

Of course we all know that the two most important commandments are to love God with all of our heart, might, mind and strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves, but is there another perspective to consider? **Several church leaders have indicated that the most important commandment to keep is the one that we are having the most difficulty with. Why is that? Because the commandment we are struggling with is the one that is stopping us from progressing further along the covenant path.** For one it may be the word of wisdom or tithing, or for another it may be the law of chastity. Whatever our struggle may be, with the help of the Lord we can overcome it. Sometimes we have to replace a bad habit with a good habit, and sometimes we have to start doing something that we have neglected to do. Just as the Savior grew from grace to grace, so should we, focusing on the task immediately before us, to become more Christlike and overcome the natural man.

367. Two Educations

The noted author and historian, James Truslow Adams wrote: **“There are obviously two educations. One should teach us how to make a living, and the other how to live.”** So much is made of formal education but how much do we learn about the informal education of “How to Live?” As we consider learning how to live there is so much to learn! **We should learn the art of living joyfully; how to be true to ourselves and come to know and live by truth. We should learn how to schedule, to prioritize, to develop relationships, to distinguish between wants and needs, to exercise and meditate, to budget, to read and ponder and to open our eyes and see the beauty of nature and the world around us. We should learn what we can do to make the world a better place; to serve, to love, to lift up others and help them to become better. We should learn how to press on regardless of what trials or tragedies may befall us.** We should learn a little about handyman skills of building, repairing, about technology, organizing and practicing good work habits. We should learn some home skills such as cooking and cleaning, and balancing a diet. We should learn to enrich our minds through study and prayer, listening to the spirit and seek learning by study and by faith. Finally, we must learn how to truly come to know our Father in Heaven and our Savior, Jesus the Christ. **Secular knowledge is indeed desirable, but the spiritual knowledge of the plan of salvation and saving ordinances is absolutely essential as we advance along the path toward Eternal Life.**

368. Make Every Decision in the Light of All Eternity

President Monson has said that decisions determine destiny. Years ago my mother, Gwen Sutton, created this thought as our family motto, **“Make Every Decision in the Light of All Eternity.”** Looking at the larger picture many choices we make will make no difference one hundred years from now but there are decisions that will make a difference. Each decision of a moral nature brings us closer to or pushes us further away from our Heavenly Father. **We must fill our lamps with the spiritual oil of conversion one drop at a time that will make us truly ready when the bridegroom, our Savior, calls us to meet Him.** We must learn to obey, to love, to serve and to grow to a point that we have no more desire to do evil but to do the will of our Heavenly Father in all things that will prepare us to return home. We must always choose those things that will keep us on the pathway toward Eternal life. That is the way of peace, of joy, and fulfillment that helps us experience the atonement and to be at one with God.

369. Successful People

Jim Rohn, international business philosopher and motivational speaker once said: **“Successful people do what unsuccessful people are not willing to do. Don’t wish it were easier, wish you were better.”** Successful people know that there is a price to pay for success. They don’t know exactly what the price is but they are committed to pay it. There are parts of every job or adventure that may be distasteful, like cleaning a toilet, but successful people know it needs to be done so they do it. For the person playing a musical instrument, repeated hours of practice may not always be enjoyable but they know that is the price that must be paid to achieve excellence. In the entitlement world we live in it can be difficult to develop the qualities that lead to successful lives. **When everything is handed on a silver platter one rarely develops the character needed for true success.** Angela Duckworth, who researched the predictors of success in many different settings, called it “grit,” the dogged determination to see the project through to a successful completion. How strong is your resolve and what price are you willing to pay to achieve it? Stick to your work until it sticks to you. **Practice may not be the funnest part of the journey, but it is the most likely indicator of preparation that will lead to success. If you want to be successful, develop the grit, determination and fortitude to achieve your goals and before you know it, you’ll have it.**

370. Fill Your Bucket List with Goodness

People make all kinds of bucket lists; things they would like to do or accomplish before they “kick the bucket” and pass from this life. It may be places to go or things to see or do. Have you thought about a bucket list of goodness? What are the good things you would like to accomplish in your lifetime? Where would temple marriage and having your children also sealed in the temple fit? What about missionary service and magnifying your callings, whatever they may be? As we dwell here on the earth, relationships and family come to the forefront. Hopefully there are wonderful places you would like to go with your spouse and children. Sharing those experiences with them deepens your bonds of love and commitment. Hopefully part of your spiritual bucket list is finding names of your ancestors who need temple ordinances and performing them for them. Hopefully part of your desire is to perform kind and thoughtful acts for all that you come in contact with. Part is nurturing those eternal relationships with spouse, family and close friends through shared experiences together. Part of your spiritual bucket list may be to do all that you can to fulfill your patriarchal blessing; to use your time, talents and resources to build the kingdom of God here upon the earth. **Someday we will pass from this life. There are things that we can take with us and things that we cannot. May we place our highest priorities on those things of eternal and lasting value that will carry meaning into our next sphere of existence and not those material things that will fade away like dust once we are gone from this earth.** Make your spiritual bucket list and experience a lifetime of growth, joy and happiness that comes through placing God first and returning back to His presence the central focus of our lives.

371. Plant then Harvest

Everyone is concerned about the harvest, but really, what comes first? Is it not the planting and then the nurturing? The famed novelist, Robert Louis Stevenson wrote: **“Don’t judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds that you plant.”** Each day there are many seeds to plant: seeds of kindness, seeds of service, seeds of knowledge, seeds of love and seeds of work. Every day should be a day of planting, and on occasion we see the fruits of that planting in the harvest. Remember, without planting there is no harvest so dedicate yourself to a life of planting seeds: seeds of goodness, seeds of faith, seeds of prayer, seeds of service and love, and look forward eventually to the day of harvest. That is the pattern and way of life, to plant, then nurture, and at last to pluck the fruit which is precious, sweet, and will bless us all the days of our lives.

372. I Have a Work for Thee

“I have a work for thee, Moses my son.” (Mos. 1:6). The Lord, speaking to Moses, told him that there was a work for him to do. He was promised that he would be made stronger than many waters in reference to the parting of the Red Sea. He also promised that he would “Lead my people from bondage, even Israel my chosen.” (Mos. 1:26). Just as the Lord had a work for Moses, so He has a work for each of us. Each of us is a son or daughter, and as such have the responsibility to honor our parents. We have our specific missions of things that we are to accomplish while here on the earth. It may be to raise a righteous posterity or to serve in a particular capacity. We all have a work to serve and we all have the opportunity to find joy through obedience to the commandments. Just as Moses showed us the way to overcome Satan through choosing to follow the Savior, so we in turn can show others by prizing the path of good and also by helping others to follow the Savior by our example, teachings, and prayers on their behalf. **We were sent here to accomplish great things! Let us begin today to magnify our lives by strict obedience to the will of God and by seeking to know what He would have us do each and every day of our lives.**

373. The Essence of Life

What is the essence of life? How do we fit into the grand scheme of things? Truly we were sent to the earth for a wise and glorious purpose. **We are spiritual beings having a mortal experience to allow us to grow and learn, overcoming by faith to someday return back to our eternal home, the presence of God.** We were sent here to be tried and tested. “And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them.” (Abr. 3:25). We were sent to learn to prize the good and to choose between the forces of good and evil. We were sent to gain physical bodies, to learn and grow and to serve others. We were not sent to see how many material possessions we could attain. We were sent to experience all that mortality has to offer with its beauty, relationships, knowledge and splendor while overcoming trials, struggles, and temptations. **We were sent to learn to make and keep covenants with God that would bind us to Him and prepare us to someday return back to His presence** through accepting and following our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ. **The essence of life is found in families and developing qualities of love, kindness, service, obedience, and a Christlike character that prepare us to become more like our Father in heaven.** The essence of life is found in sharing that message with our brothers and sisters all over the earth, that they may also enjoy those same blessings and opportunities.

374. Greatness

“Greatness is not found in possessions, power, position or prestige. It is discovered in goodness, humility, service and character.” (WA Ward). Isn't it interesting that in that statement there are found two entirely different definitions of greatness? The world's definition of greatness is probably found in the first half of the statement: possessions, power, position or prestige. The true and lasting definition of greatness is found in the second half of the statement: goodness, humility, service and character. Think of our Savior, Jesus Christ. He had no worldly possessions, but rather gave His life in service and character showing us the path to follow through Christlike virtues. He was the perfect example of goodness and humility. In a spiritual sense we never stand taller than when we are found on our knees in humble prayer and supplication for God's direction in our lives. When our lives are focused on goodness, humility, service and character, we don't need to worry about fame or fortune, for we will have found the pearl of great price of everlasting value.

375. Every Day is a Great Day

President Gordon B. Hinckley was an optimist. Speaking to a group of missionaries in the Philippines he said: “Yesterday was a great day in my life. Every day is a great day in my life. I hope every day is a great day in your life- every one of you. Jeffrey R. Holland said “Things will work out” may well be President Hinckley's most repeated assurance to family friends and associates. “Keep trying, Be Believing. Be happy. Don't get discouraged. Things will work out.” President Hinckley went on to teach: “There is a terrible ailment of pessimism in the land. It's almost endemic. We're constantly fed a steady and sour diet of character assassination, faultfinding, evil speaking of one another...We have every reason to be optimistic in this world. Tragedy around yes. Problems everywhere, yes, But you can't, you don't build out of pessimism or cynicism. You look with optimism, work with faith, and things happen. Do not despair. Do not give up. Look for the sunlight through the clouds. Opportunities will eventually open to you...The Lord's plan is a plan of happiness. The way will be lighter, the worries will be fewer, the confrontations will be less difficult if we cultivate a spirit of happiness.” **Yes, every day is a great day with new opportunities, challenges and experiences to enjoy. Make every day a great day by living with a spirit of optimism, joy, and happiness, and you will have discovered one of the greatest secrets of life.**